

Below are some excerpts from several theologians and academics -

Immortal soul

1. Immortality of the Soul or the Resurrection of the Dead?

Oscar Cullmann

The MacMillan Company

1958

Preface *No other publication of mine has provoked such enthusiasm or such violent hostility...Another writer takes me for a kind of monster who delights in causing spiritual distress.* [p.5]

Belief in the immortality of the soul is not belief in a revolutionary event. Immortality, in fact, is only a negative assertion; the soul does not die, but simply lives on. Resurrection is a positive assertion: the whole man, who has really died, is recalled to life by a new act of creation by God. Something has happened--a miracle of creation! For something has also happened previously, something fearful: life formed by God has been destroyed. [p.27] He concludes: *The answer to the question, 'Immortality of the soul or resurrection of the dead in the New Testament' is unequivocal. The teaching of the great philosophers Socrates and Plato can in no way be brought into consonance with that of the New Testament.* [p. 60]

2. Death and Immortality

Josef Pieper

St. Augustine's Press

1968 [original copyright]

Let us then speak first of what death means within the whole of existence, and say that its sovereignty is such that there can be no zone of our beings which remains uninvolved, exempt. [p.28] *In a word, when the individual dies he is extinguished, body and soul.* [p.95] *Understandably, above all, is the protest of Christian theologians that 'immortality' has nothing whatsoever to do with the doctrines of the New Testament.* [p.100] *...because the soul does not possess the perfection of its nature, not even the godlikeness it is capable of achieving, except in conjunction with the body...*[p.117]

3. Immortality and Resurrection

Benoit Murphy

Herder and Herder

1970

...immortality...has had the unfortunate effect of leading people to believe that, after all, only the body dies - as if the real subject, the inner core of personality, were completely unaffected by death. [p.119]

4. Death and Eternal Life

John Hick

Harper and Row, Publishers

1976

In facing death we face total destruction and non-existence; and only faith in the gracious goodness of God gives us hope beyond the grave. [p.180]

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5. Principles of Christian Theology

John Macquarrie

Scribner's

1977 second edition

...we have never experience [sic!] of souls apart from bodies...By a "person" we do not mean an invisible, intangible and immaterial soul-substance, but always an embodied self in the world. [pp.74-76] ... "immortality"...implies some kind of substantial soul, and that the substance of this soul is imperviable and so endures forever...The other defect in the expression of "immortality" is that it suggests a soul that carries on apart from the body. [pp. 362-363]

6. Eternal Life

Life after Death

as a Medical, Philosophical and Theological Problem

Hans Kung

Doubleday

1984

pp.110-112

When the New Testament speaks of resurrection, it does not refer to the natural continuance of a spirit-soul independent of bodily functions....Easter is not a feast of immortality...[p.111]

7. Christian Doctrine

Revised Edition

Shirley C. Guthrie

Westminster/John Knox Press

1994

pp.379-381

Bible-believing Christians must reject the doctrine of the soul's immortality because it is based on an unbiblical understanding of what the soul is...According to scripture, in other words, my soul is just as human, creaturely, finite - and mortal - as my body. [p.379]

8. The Evolution of the Soul, Revised Edition

Richard Swinburne

Clarendon Press, Oxford, England

1997

Dualist philosophers of the past have usually affirmed the natural immortality of the soul – that the soul has such a nature , or the laws of nature are such , that [barring suspension of natural laws] it will continue to function forever. The failure of the argument is, I suggest, typical of the failure of dualist arguments to show that the soul has an immortal nature or, at any rate, a nature such that it is able to go on functioning 'under its own steam'.... The view of the evolved human soul which I have been advocating may be elucidated by the following analogy. The soul is like a light bulb and the brain is like an electric light socket. If you plug the bulb into the socket and turn the current on, the light will shine. If the socket is damaged or the current turned off, the light will not shine. So, too, the soul will function (have a mental life) if it is plugged into a functioning brain. Destroy the brain or cut off the nutriment supplied by the blood, and the soul will cease to function, remaining inert. But it can be revived and made to function again by repairing or reassembling the brain-just as the light can be made to shine again by repairing the socket and turning on the current. [pp.305-310]

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9. *Surprised by Hope*

N.T. Wright

Harper One

2008

...the idea that every human posses an immortal soul, which is the “real” part of them, finds little support in the Bible. [p.28]

10. “Mind, Spirit, Soul, Body

All For One and One for All

Reflections on Paul’s Anthropology”

N.T. Wright

Society of Christian Philosophers

March 2011

[excerpts:]

I’m afraid I do regard the traditional Christian preaching about everyone having a ‘soul’ which needs ‘saving’ as now almost hopelessly misleading...When the New Testament uses this language – which it very, very rarely does, by the way – it didn’t mean anything like what westerners since the Middle Ages have supposed... The story of all four gospels is not the story of how God came in Jesus to rescue souls for a disembodied, other-worldly heaven...To speak, as many Christians have done, of the body dying, and the soul going marching on, is not only a travesty of what Paul says. It has encouraged many to suppose that the victory over death is the escape of the soul from the dead body. That is a dangerous lie. It is resurrection that is the defeat of death. To think of the body dying and of something, the soul or whatever, continuing onwards isn’t a victory over death. It is simply a description, however inadequate, of death itself. Let us not collude with the enemy.

11. *Practicing Christian Doctrine*

An Introduction to Thinking and Living Theologically

Beth Felker Jones

Baker Academic

2014

Scripture does not divide human beings into pieces in our relationships with God. Christian thought about the human creature, like Christian thought on creation, rejects hierarchal dualism. The human being is not a soul in hostile relationship with a body. The human being is always one thing, one creature, in life before God. We are both bodily and spiritual, and the bodily and the spiritual are united in us. Compare this with the dualist concept of the human being in which the body and soul are antagonistically associated, with the body irrelevant to what it means to be truly human. Christians reject Platonic dualism.... [pp. 100-101]